



FEATURE

Walking Montana's Ghost Towns

# Untold Story Leads From Montana



*Amtrak station, Glasgow, Montana.*

FALL 1999  
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## THE EMPIRE BUILDER

### CHUGGING ALONG ON MONTANA'S HI-LINE

Climb aboard Amtrak's Empire Builder for a celebration. For 70 years this train has hauled passengers across the 2,256-mile route from Chicago to the Pacific Northwest. In Montana, the Empire Builder travels across the northern border of the state known as the Hi-line.

"Train travelers see a stretch of Montana that many miss," says Roberta Barsted with the Glasgow Chamber of Commerce. "I don't think people realize how beautiful and diverse the landscape is up on Montana's Hi-line."

The diverse landscape on Montana's Hi-line is dotted with rolling hills, open prairie, jagged mountains and lush forests. Passengers traveling east to west are welcomed at stops in Wolf Point, Glasgow, Malta, Havre, Shelby, Cut Bank, Browning, Glacier National Park, Essex, Belton-West Glacier and Whitefish.

In 1929, this train was named in honor of James J. Hill, the founder of the Great

Northern Railroad. Hill became known as the Empire Builder not only for the transcontinental railroad that he built, but also for his vision and leadership in the development of the Great Northern states.

Through the years this popular train has carried homesteaders and travelers to a land of great opportunity and beauty. It also opened up a whole new vacation paradise for many travelers by introducing them to Glacier National Park. Today, the Empire Builder is the only Amtrak train with door-to-door service to a national park.

Barsted notes that while the Empire Builder is a wonderful means of travel for vacationers to the Big Sky, it is also the only means of public transportation east to west for those living in the small communities on Montana's Hi-line. "It's really convenient; I hope the train continues to operate so everyone can enjoy the ride."

For more information on the Empire Builder call Amtrak at 1-800-872-7245



# Making Music: Montana's Symphony Orchestras



Helena Symphony Society concert at Helena Cathedral, Helena, Montana.

It's true, Montanans love their country music, but in many parts of the state, the violin and cello are replacing the fiddle and steel guitar. The seven communities of Billings, Butte, Bozeman, Great Falls, Helena, Kalispell and Missoula all host symphony orchestras. Both the Butte and Billings orchestras are closing in on their 50th seasons.

"There is a lot of musical talent found throughout Montana," says John Barsness,

Executive Director of the Montana Association of Symphony Orchestras. "For these musicians, playing in these orchestras is not their primary job, it is a labor of love." Barsness explains that while the symphonies all have full-time music directors, they cooperate among themselves by sharing musicians and sheet music for performances.

The musical arrangements these symphonies perform range from baroque composers to the Big Band era of Duke Ellington to theme music from *The Horse Whisperer* and *A River Runs Through It*. Last March, in commemoration of their 40th anniversary, the Great Falls Symphony and Choir debuted a specially commissioned composition, "From the Journals of Lewis and Clark." Montana native Daniel Bukvich composed it.

Barsness explains that the love of the symphony isn't restricted to Montana's largest cities; the small towns of Miles City and Scobey both have chamber orchestras. He also adds, in order to spread the music, many of the orchestras perform outreach concerts in the rural areas.

The Montana symphony season runs September to May. For more information call John Barsness at (406) 585-9551

## Montana's Other Symphony

It's a crisp clear autumn morning. A thin layer of frost covers your tent. As the rising sun casts a pink tinge on the horizon, you lie in your sleeping bag slowly waking up. Suddenly, a shrill noise echoes from the woods. You think, oh no, those Bigfoot stories in Montana are true!

No need for alarm, this wild call isn't after you, it's after female or cow elk. This is the mating call or bugle of a bull elk. From late August through early October this "haunting" symphony can be heard throughout Montana's wildlands.

According to Jodi Bishop with the Missoula-based Rocky Mountain Elk Foundation, bull elk are polygamous. In order to attract cows, or harems for mating, the bull has to let the ladies know that he's their best choice and at the same time, warn the other bulls to stay away from his turf.

While the Yellowstone Park area is a feast for your ears, eastern Montana's 1.1 million-acre Charles M. Russell National Wildlife Refuge also provides some spectacular elk viewing.

According to CMR Refuge Manager, Mike Hedrick, when Lewis and Clark passed through eastern and central Montana in 1804, elk were a common sight. Unfortunately, unregulated hunting had elim-



inated elk from the region by the earl 1900s. However, Hedrick explains that in 1951 and 1952, wildlife agents and ranchers rounded up 161 elk from Yellowstone National Park and transported them to the CMR. This reintroduction led to the thriving elk herd of approximately 3,000 animals present today. Hedrick suggests the best time to view bugling elk is early morning or late evening.

So if you happen to be in a rut, why not head to the hills and listen to a little bit of nature's music. For more information on elk viewing call Rocky Mountain Elk Foundation at 1-800-CALL-ELK or the CMR at (406) 538-8706

# A Haunting Good Time.

## MONTANA'S GHOST TOWNS



Elkhorn Ghost Town, Gold West Country, Montana.

During the late 1850s, prospectors struck gold in Montana. By the turn of the century gold and silver mining was booming and thousands flocked to the "Treasure State" to settle in and make

their fortunes. When the minerals went bust, the people went with it. Leaving their towns for dead. Today, some would believe these towns have lost their glitter, but for others they hold historic treasures.

"When you visit a Montana ghost town you can feel the spirits of the past here. It's not necessarily supernatural spirits, but the spirits of western lore," says John DeHaas with the Montana Ghost Town Preservation Society. DeHass explains that when you discover a ghost town you really get to use your imagination. By seeing the physical evidence of the old hotels, saloons and outhouses you have some idea of what life might have been like 130 years ago.

While Montana is dotted with over 60

ghost towns, some of the best examples include: Elkhorn, home to Fraternity Brothers Hall, considered to be one of western America's most historically significant structures still standing; Bannack

State Park, the site of Montana's first major gold strike; Garnet, which has more than 30 preserved buildings and a site where snowmobilers and skiers can rent cabins; and Virginia City and Nevada City, two authentically preserved and restored mining camps from the 1860's gold rush. And for museum lovers, the town of Philipsburg features the Ghost Town Hall of Fame.

According to DeHaas, many people travel to Montana to explore the state's vast wilderness. A visit to a Montana ghost town is also experiencing the wilderness, it's just a different type.

For more information on Montana's ghost towns call the Montana Historical Society at (406) 444-2694



Garnet Ghost town on the Garnet Backcountry Byway

# How to Visit Montana From Miles Away



Looking for a great travel story? Want to find out about the latest events under the Big Sky? Interested in finding the best places to hike, bike, raft, ski, camp, horseback ride...(You get the picture.)

Your answers are only a click away. Travel Montana's website, VISITMT.COM, has a new look. The revamped site is designed to make searching for a Montana travel

experience fun, easier and more informative.

Some of the exciting new features include the ability to send electronic postcards with Montana photos or graphics to friends and family and to e-mail Montana information from each page on the site. VISITMT.COM also showcases over 5,000 photos of Montana's tourism-related services, attractions and communities, as well as highlighting an extensive calendar of events from across the state.

## Flathead State Park is "Yurt" Kind of Place

Seeking an alternative to pitching a tent? Why not roam to western Montana's Flathead Lake State Park and experience a yurt. A yurt? Described as a "Mongolian tipi," this ancient sphere-shaped structure has been used by nomadic tribes in Siberia for centuries.

"This is our pilot yurt," says Debbie Cheek with Montana's Department of Fish, Wildlife and Parks. "It allows visitors a chance to experience the outdoors without sleeping on the ground." According to Cheek, since these unique dwellings have been designed to withstand intense winds and retain heat in the winter, it is a natural fit in Montana.

Standing 10 ft. tall and 20 ft. wide, the yurt can sleep up to six people. It is equipped with most comforts of home including electricity, heat and a propane barbecue. Campers need only bring along sleeping bags, cooking utensils and something in which to store water.

Cheek explains that if the yurt proves to be popular, FWP hopes to construct others throughout the state. The yurt costs \$35 per night from May to September and \$25 from October to April. But, if this isn't "yurt" style, Montana's state parks also rent cabins year-round and tipis in the summer months. For more information on yurt rental call (406) 751-4577.

## Montanas Historic Home on the Range: Grant-Kohrs Ranch

Twenty-seven years ago, the Grant-Kohrs Ranch, located outside of Deer Lodge, became a National Historic Site within the National Park System. The ranch was set aside for the purpose of providing "an understanding of the frontier cattle era of the nation's history."

First settled in the 1860s by cattle baron Johnny Grant and later purchased by Conrad Kohrs, this present-day historic site was once headquarters for a cattle empire that spread over 10 million acres across Montana, Wyoming, Idaho, Colorado and Canada.

"When someone travels to Grant-Kohrs they'll experience all the sights, sounds and smells of what a frontier ranch was like," says Tony Schetzlsle, Park Superintendent.

According to Schetzlsle, visitors can see a Civil War ambulance that carried the wounded back from the battle of the Big Hole, hear the clank of a blacksmith's hammer and taste some beans that are cooked over a roaring campfire.

Visitors can also peek into the Grant-Kohrs homestead. This 28-room mansion contains over 26,000 original furnishings of Augusta and Conrad Kohrs. View the desk where Conrad sat while reading a letter he received from Teddy Roosevelt or stand beneath the impressive 6-foot-wide Longhorn mount the "cattle king" received as a gift from his Chicago stockbroker.

Take a step back in time with a visit to Grant-Kohrs Ranch. Open year-round.

Guided tours by costumed interpreters are provided. For more information call the Grant-Kohrs Ranch at (406) 846-2070.



COURTESY OF GRANT-KOHR'S RANCH, KEN WEST



## SEPTEMBER

- 1-6 Milk River Wagon Train—Malta 654-1796
- 1-6 Ravalli County Fair—Hamilton 363-3411
- 3-4 Saco Fun Days—Saco 527-3218 or 527-3265
- 3-5 Living History—Fairview 747-5259
- 4 Buffalo Days Celebration—Gardiner 848-7971
- 4 Chief Plenty Coups Day of Honor—Pryor 252-1289
- 4 Chili Cook-Off—Big Sky 995-2742 or 995-2472
- 4 Fromberg Labor Day Celebration—Fromberg 668-7383
- 4 Wild West Day—Bigfork 837-5861
- 4-5 Labor Day Wagon Train—Culbertson 787-5821
- 4-6 Labor Day Rodeo—White Sulphur Springs 547-3366
- 4-6 Poplar Indian Days—Poplar 768-5155 or 768-3351
- 5 'Running of the Sheep' Sheep Drive—Reedpoint 326-2288
- 5-6 Helmsville Labor Day Rodeo—Helmsville 288-3273
- 6 Labor Day Arts Fair—Red Lodge 446-1370
- 7-12 Undercover Gals Quilt Show—Hardin 665-2525
- 9 Taste of Whitefish—Whitefish 862-3501
- 10 River's Edge Trail—Blues & Brews—Great Falls 453-0601 or 761-4966
- 10-11 Chinook Western Days—Chinook 357-3191
- 10-11 Montana Old Time Fiddlers' Convention—Lewistown 736-5391 or 227-8633
- 10-12 Big Sky Draft Horse Expo—Deer Lodge 846-3111
- 10-12 Libby Nordicfest—Libby 293-4167
- 10-12 NW Montana Arms Collectors' Gun Show—Kalispell 755-3980
- 10-12 Rendezvous & Trade Show—Missoula 442-4008
- 10-12 Whitefish Summer Games—Whitefish 863-2470 or 862-4035
- 11 Montana State Chokecherry Festival—Lewistown 538-5436
- 11-12 Cottonwood Folk Festival—Great Falls 452-3462
- 11-12 NW Montana Antique Power Ass'n Threshing Bee—Columbia Falls 862-7738
- 12 Germanfest—Missoula 721-9620
- 12 Historic Bell Street Bridge Day—Glendive 365-5601
- 12 Hot Laps Mountain Bike Jam—Missoula 549-9777 or 543-3331
- 12 Utica Day Fair—Utica 423-5364
- 13 Canyon Creek Battlefield Pipe Ceremony—Laurel 628-8105
- 15-19 Ride the Russell Trail—Utica 423-5454
- 16-20 Testicle Festival—Clinton 825-4868
- 17-18 Belgrade Fall Festival—Belgrade 388-1616
- 17-18 North American Indian Alliance Pow Wow—Butte 782-0461
- 17-18 Threshing Bee—Choteau 466-2470
- 17-19 Havre Festival Days—Havre 265-4383
- 18 Quilt Show—Broadus 436-2416
- 19 Highland Games Festival—Glasgow 228-2222
- 20-24 Native American Awareness Week—Pablo 675-0160
- 22-26 Hoffman Challenge—Travelling Exhibit of 50 Wallhangings—Kalispell 257-5799

- 23-26 Laurel Herbstfest—Laurel 628-7852
- 24-26 Flathead Valley Annual Quilt Show—Kalispell 257-4612
- 24-26 Sandcreek Clydesdales Annual Wagon Train—Jordan 557-2865
- 25 Pasture Golf Tournament—Acton 248-9295
- 25-26 Northeast Montana Threshing Bee and Antique Show—Culbertson 787-5265

## OCTOBER

- 1 Artwalk Downtown—Billings 252-0122
- 1-2 Northeast Montana Fall Festival and Trade Show—Wolf Point 653-1900
- 1-2 Oktoberfest—Great Falls 771-8580
- 1-3 Port Polson Annual Oktoberfest and Harvest Festival—Polson 883-4345
- 2 Apple Days—Hamilton 363-3338
- 2 Fort Missoula Festival—Missoula 728-3662
- 2 Oktoberfest II—Superior 822-4891
- 2-3 Pioneer Power Day Threshing Bee—Lewistown 538-5236
- 7-10 6th Annual Glacier Jazz Stampede—Kalispell 862-3814
- 7-11/14 Five Years at the Refuge: A Retrospective Celebration—Miles City 232-0635
- 8 Rhythm & Blues and Micro Brews—Billings 252-3610
- 8-10 Oktoberfest—Helena 447-5221
- 8-11 Alta/Mont Railfan Weekend—Essex 888-5700
- 9 Fiesta Days—Whitefish 862-3501
- 9 Fall Festival—Miles City 232-4420
- 9-16 NILE Stock Show and Rodeo—Billings 256-2495
- 10 Columbia Falls Snowmobile Grass & Drag Races—Columbia Falls 892-PLAY
- 16 Tamarack Time!—Bigfork 837-4848
- 16 Celebrate the Cowpoke through Poetry and Music—Hamilton 363-3338
- 16-17 Glacier Golden Autumn Arts and Crafts Show and Sale—Essex 888-5700
- 17 Forest Grove Arts & Crafts Show—Forest Grove 538-3510
- 22-12/3 Bald Eagle Migration—Helena 475-3128
- 23 Lewistown Craft Show & Sale—Lewistown 538-3640
- 23 16th Annual Autumn Art & Craft Show—Helena 449-4790
- 23-24 Christmas at the Mansion—Kalispell 755-2166
- 30 Ghost Walks—Bannack 444-3750

## NOVEMBER

- 1-30 Cross-Country Fall Ski Camp—West Yellowstone 646-7701
- 5-6 6th Annual Holiday Art & Craft Show—Kalispell 449-4790
- 6 Winter Fair—Choteau 466-5340
- 6 Big Timber Christmas Bazaar and Craft Show—Big Timber 932-4035
- 6 Wine and Food Festival—Sidney 488-2357
- 7 Helmsville Craft Bazaar—Helmsville 793-5530
- 11-14 Christmas Collection—Great Falls 727-8255
- 12-14 Huff's Antique Show and Sale—Billings 628-4493
- 13 Specialty Fair—Malta 654-1436
- 13 Country Christmas—Lewistown 428-2316
- 13-14 Holiday Food Festival & Seasonal Creations Craft Show—Billings 657-1269

- 19 Downtown Helena Fall Art Walk—Helena 447-1535
- 19-20 Annual Holiday Market Place—Missoula 543-8798
- 19-12/31 Miniatures: The Little Picture Show/Bridles, Bits and Beads—Miles City 232-0635
- 20 Bigfork Elves Decorate for Christmas—Bigfork 837-5888
- 20 Cut Bank Winter Festival—Cut Bank 873-4041
- 20-21 Holiday Antique Show—Great Falls 761-4684
- 20-21 American Cup Competition—Butte 494-2329
- 22-1/2 Christmas at the Moss Mansion—Billings 256-5100
- 23-12/24 Holiday Market Room—Lewistown 538-8278
- 24 Conrad Christmas Stroll—Conrad 278-7791
- 26 Christmas Stroll—Havre 265-4383
- 26 Christmas City of the North Parade—Kalispell 758-2800
- 26 Christmas Stroll and Parade of Lights—Sidney 482-1916
- 26 Christmas Stroll—Anaconda 563-2400
- 26 Holiday Parade—Billings 259-5260
- 26 Holiday Light Parade—Glendive 365-5601
- 26 Christmas Walk and Parade of Lights—Forsyth 356-2134
- 26 Crazy Mountain Christmas—Big Timber 932-4678
- 26-27 Holiday Festival of the Arts—Bozeman 587-2034
- 26-28 Renaissance Fair—Missoula 538-2212
- 26-28 Artists and Craftsmen Christmas Show—Kalispell 881-4288
- 27 Holiday Fair—Anaconda 563-2422
- 27 Madison Valley Women's Club Holiday Craft Bazaar—Ennis 682-7705
- 29-12/3 Livingston Country Christmas—Livingston 222-0850

## FROM MONTANA



The diversity of events, places and people in Montana is almost as wide as the state itself. We hope to give you a taste of that diversity with this quarterly newsletter. In addition, my office offers these services to editors, writers and producers.

### Visual Materials

Color slides, 8" x 10" B/W photos, and stock video footage are available for editorial use.

### Writer/Photographer Referrals

We can put you in contact with many of Montana's most talented and experienced freelance writers and photographers.

### Editorial Copy/Calendar of Events

We'll provide background information or editorial copy for many subjects. We also maintain a calendar of events for the entire state.

### Individual Attention

If you need the latest vacation guide and road map of Montana, a liaison with other government agencies, or detailed information to fit a specific story angle, we're here to assist you.

Mary Boyle  
Publicity Coordinator

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